

## **UMES Office of Instructional Technology Guidelines and Requirements for Fully Online Courses**

All faculty at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore are encouraged and supported in their use and development of course websites. The majority of course websites developed will help the instructor deliver a **Web-Assisted** course that is fully classroom orientated with a course website used to deliver learning materials, facilitate communications, and/or provide links to resources. Other courses will follow the **Hybrid Model** which will blend face-to-face interaction with online learning and customarily involve the delivery of curricular materials, access to resources, submission of assignments, project based learning, learning activities that foster higher order thinking, and online communications that may be asynchronous or synchronous in nature. In order for a class to be considered hybrid some actual student learning and learning assessment must occur online and a percentage of in-class time is forfeited to make up for the weight put on the online learning activities. The smallest number of courses will be **Fully-Online** learning experiences where all learning and assessment occurs online and the course does not meet in person. Fully-online courses are perfect for delivery during non-traditional semesters (e.g. winter and summer sessions) and when students and/or instructors are off campus (e.g. internship seminars, select graduate courses, research seminars, etc).

The benefits of a fully online course are:

- Can allow a course to include students located in multiple locations
- Instructor can run and manage course from any location
- Asynchronous element allows students to work according to their own schedule.
- Allow courses to run with fewer students.
- Does not tie up classroom space.
- Self Directed learning
- Faculty can personalize interactions and learning experiences by responding to individual student needs
- More courses can be run over the summer and winter breaks
- Extended resources
- Satisfies University System of Maryland out of classroom experiences/non-traditional learning mandate

In order to assure that fully online courses delivered are of a high quality the UMES Office of Instructional Technology has developed a set of guidelines and requirements. All online courses must be approved by the Office of Instructional Technology as satisfactory. All instructors developing a fully-online course for the first time must meet with a representative of the Office of Instructional Technology consultation. The consultation and, if necessary, follow up sessions may include training, curriculum development assistance, and/or technical support.

The guidelines that follow have been influenced by those established by the Digital Campus of California State University, Fresno articulated in *Guidelines and Resources for Developing and Teaching Online Courses*, 2002.

# UMES E-learning Standards

## 1. Goals & Objectives

The instructor must establish goals and objectives that reflect not just the content of the course but also the online learning environment. These should be reflected in the form of student learning outcomes that are communicated in a manner that is clear and measurable. These must be identified in advance of creating the course and must be communicated directly to students in the syllabus.

## 2. Instructional Activities

All instructional activities should be designed to reflect the subject matter, the benefits available through e-learning (e.g. project based learning, authentic instruction, webquests). These activities should be thoughtfully designed to assist students in achieving the instructional objectives. All activities should have a clear purpose, be organized, and spread throughout the semester.

## 3. Assessment

A variety of formal and informal assessment measures are used to evaluate student learning and judge the effectiveness of the instruction.

## 4. Interaction & Feedback

Interaction and feedback among students, between students and the instructor, and between students and instructional materials are key issues to consider in any course but especially in a course that is delivered online.

## 5. Instructional Materials

The materials delivered must enhance learning and support learning goals. They should never distract and/or detract from the learning process nor place unnecessary stress or burden on students. Materials must be accessible, include instructions, logically organized, and available to students with slow internet connections.

## 6. Feedback

The instructor must be readily accessible to students and provide timely and meaningful feedback to students. The type of feedback a student will receive must be communicated to students in advance.

## 7. Pace of Learning

Online content and learning activities should be paced by the instructor.

## 8. Use of Communication Tools

Communication tools can be used for real time communication (synchronous) or time independent (asynchronous) communication between students and the instructor. The use of tools should be thoughtful and educationally relevant. The instructor *must be* an active participant in online chats and/or discussions. Performance expectations must be articulated to students. The Office of Instructional Technology has developed a rubric

which can be adopted by UMES faculty for assessing student discussion/chat performance.

### **9. Grade Reporting**

Student grades must be made available to students individually, privately, and in a timely fashion using the grading tools.

### **10. Interface Design**

The interface must be clear, professional, *simple*, appropriate, and planned in such a way to facilitate learning. A UMES template is available through the Center for Instructional Technology.

### **11. Multimedia Elements**

Multimedia elements can greatly enhance the learning experience for students of varying learning styles; however, when ill planned and/or developed they can be a tremendous distraction and/or place a burden on the students. As a result, they must be meaningful and accessible to students.

### **12. Course Management**

Course management is a vital to the e-learning equation. Instructors **can not be** absent from their online course and must manage all aspects of learning.

### **13. Time Requirements**

Online courses take time to develop and are more time consuming initially than their in-person counterparts; however, once created the course can be re-uploaded from semester to semester with only minor improvement/ modifications needed. The instructor should also plan on offering an online office hour(s) as well as checking the course website on a daily or near daily basis.

### **Evaluation Rubric**

A rubric has been formed (see Table 1). Its initial incarnation was heavily influenced by the work of Dawn Truelson and Michelle Fisher (2002) at the Digital Campus of California State University in Fresno California. Over time; however, this rubric has been modified to fit the goal of creating fully online learning experiences that serve as meaningful learning objects.

All fully online courses require approval by the Office of Instructional Technology. The minimum standard/score for endorsement by Office of Instructional Technology is 42 out of a possible 51 points.

**Table 1:  
UMES Online Course Evaluation Rubric**

	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
1. Prerequisites are described.	Prerequisites are clearly listed in multiple areas and well explained.	Prerequisites are clearly listed.	Prerequisite are incomplete, hard to access, or poorly organized.	No prerequisites listed at this time.
2. Technology requirements are listed.	Technology requirements are listed and well explained.	Requirements listed.	Requirements are incomplete.	No requirements are listed at this time.
3. Goals and outcomes.	Goals and outcomes are given and written are clear and measurable.	Listed but may not be clear and/or measurable.	Vague and are not consistent.	None exist at this time.
4. Activities support learning.	All activities are related to student outcomes and/or course goals.	Activities appear to support achievement.	Activities do no appear to be related to goals and/or outcomes.	No activities listed at this time.
5. Assessment measures progress towards goals and outcomes.	Assessment of student progress is given throughout the course and links to goals and outcomes.	Assessment measures student progress towards goals and outcomes.	Assessment does not measure progress.	No assessment addressed at this time.
6. A variety of tools enhance interaction.	Sustained interaction is facilitated by the use of communication tools.	Interaction is facilitated by the use of communication tools.	Little interaction is facilitated by the use of communication tools.	No interaction is defined at this time.
7. Course materials.	Materials are easily to locate, accessible, understandable, meaningful, organized logically, and developed to enhance student achievement.	Most materials are easily to locate, accessible, understandable, meaningful, organized logically, and developed to enhance student achievement; however, some require improvement.	Materials are either difficult to locate, require too many technical steps, hard to understand, not meaningful, poorly organized, and or irrelevant.	No materials have been included at this time.
8. Student support.	Instructor uses communication tolls to provide students with readily available and timely support that helps keeps students on target.	Instructor uses communication tolls to interact with students and provide support.	Instructor sometimes communicates with students directly.	Instructor does not communicate with students directly, meaningfully, and/or in a timely manner.
9. Frequent and timely feedback.	Instructor provides frequent and timely feedback.	Instructor provides feedback.	Instructor sometimes provides feedback.	No feedback is provided.
10. Appropriate pacing.	All learning and activities are paced by the instructor in a way that is meaningful and facilitates learning mastery. Calendar tool is utilized.	Instructor paces most activities and the schedule is listed on the syllabus.	Some activities are paced.	No evidence of pacing exists at this time.
11. Expectations for student discussion/chat participation.	Expectations for student discussion/chat participation are well developed, consistent, and communicated clearly to students.	Participation expectations are communicated to students.	Expectations are vague and/or unclear.	No expectations exist at this time.

12. Grading	Grading is timely, accessible by students, and secure.	Grades are accessible to students and secure.	Grades are inconsistently made available to students and/or are not secure.	Grades not available to students.
13. Course content	Course content is clear, meaningful, plentiful, accessible, and supported by the instructor.	Course content is for the most part clear, meaningful, accessible, and supported by the instructor.	Course content is not always meaningful, clear, and/or accessible.	Course content is weak and lacking.
14. Navigation	Navigation is clear, logical, and all buttons/links work.	Navigation is mostly clear and most buttons/links work.	Problems with navigation exist. Student may become lost.	Navigation may cause confusion.
15. Display	Color, buttons, images, graphics, and etcetera enhance the course.	Some display elements are distracting and/or slow to open.	Elements may be unrelated, distracting, and/or unnecessary.	Elements are weak, distracting, time consuming, burdensome, unprofessional, inappropriate, and or sloppy.
16. Multimedia (if appropriate)	Multimedia used is appropriate, enhances learning, accessible, professionally created, linked to course content, available in an alternative text based format, and work.	Multimedia used is appropriate, enhances learning, professionally created, but may not be linked to course content, available in an alternative text based format, and work/ accessible.	Multimedia used may be unnecessary, not linked to content, difficult to access, and or problematic.	Multimedia is unprofessional, distracting, and/or burdensome.
17. Time Devoted	The instructor devotes the appropriate amount of time to the development of the course, timely support of student learning, and sustaining of learning. Online office hours are provided.	The instructor devotes the appropriate amount of time to the development of the course, support of student learning, and sustaining of learning.	The instructor must devote more time to this course.	Not enough time has been spent and/is allocated for this course.
<b>Results</b>	<b>This course is fully endorsed and the instructor is commended for their hard work.</b>	<b>This course is approved with modifications.</b>	<b>This course requires major reworking.</b>	<b>This course is sub par.</b>